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Youth Services Minutes 01/28/2004

TOWN OF ARLINGTON BOARD OF YOUTH SERVICES

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Donna Dolan, Chair
 Mary Deyst, Vice Chair
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MINUTES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Present: Donna Dolan, chair; Mary Deyst, vice chair; Jack Bowler; Elaine Shea; Carlene Newell; Jeannette Mills; Joan Robbio; Cindy Sheridan; Gene Lucarelli; Larry Greco; Patsy Kraemer, ex officio; Dave McKenna, ex officio; Elizabeth Oppedisano, ex officio.

Absent: Dorothy Williams

Guests: Irwin Avery, Paul Grossman, Linda Suzuki, Phyllis Brown, Norm Goldstein, Barbara Tosti – AYCC staff.

Three communications were received by the Board, including a letter from the Park Avenue Congregational Church presenting a \$1000 donation to AYCC.

Patsy brought to the Board funding requests from the Gift Fund, including \$210 for a scholarship support for after school funding for an AYCC client and \$500 for the nonprofit application. Jack Bowler moved, Elaine Shea seconded approval of the funding. Unanimous vote. Dave McKenna announced that the Rotary Club will also be willing to help with requests.

Joan Robbio led a discussion on long range planning. Collective concerns were solicited from the group of Board members and AYCC staff members about the future transitions at AYCC – i.e. Irwin's imminent retirement, Patsy's longer-range retirement, Norm Goldstein's retirement and Leon Cantor's retirement. (The accumulated "Collective concerns" list is attached).

Patsy gave an overview of the current state of human services in Arlington. She felt that the current networking of services in Arlington is excellent. The Department of Human Services provides a safety net for Arlington citizens to receive help and information when they are experiencing a problem. She feels that the number one unmet need in Arlington continues to be affordable housing. Closely behind that number one unmet need is the poorly met need of adequate health care coverage and affordable prescriptions. As the transitions of staff approach, she feels that it is important to maintain the services and good staff. She feels that the Boards and Commissions in Human Services will be very important advocacy groups throughout this process.

Patsy outlined the goals that she has developed for the coming fiscal year. These goals will be present to the new town manager at the next department head's meeting. Her goals are:

- Maintain adequate funding and staffing throughout the department.
- Initiate a long range planning process for future transitions.
- Convince the powers that be that human services are "life and death" services and are therefore vital services.
- Establish a human services website.

She feels that this is an opportunity to look at our services, our structures and evaluate whether they are current and adequate. She would recommend a needs assessment for services in Arlington. We may discover some fresh ideas.

Patsy then reviewed the structure of the Department of Human Services, highlighting the fact that she wears three primary hats, i.e. Director of Human Services, Director of Youth Services, and Manager of the Whittemore Robbins House. A new director would not necessarily wear all three hats. Patsy would recommend that Youth Services have a separate director, like the other divisions in Human Services. She also highlighted the importance of the new non-profit corporation, the Arlington Health & Human Services Charitable Corporation to the future of services in

Arlington.

Joan then gave an overview of issues to be considered as the group organizes for the future. These issues include:

- *possible money sources
- *needs in community – importance of hard data
- *historically as needs have changed, we have adapted
- *emerging needs from schools – how can we partner with them
- *competitors – how do we identify them
- *our services are unique- including comfort level at agency
- *get feel for new town manager
- *anticipate new superintendent and linkage with school
- *think through linkage with community safety – police, fire, courts
- *links to others, i.e. Armstrong Ambulance, DSS, DA's office, FinCom, Selectmen, Boys & Girls Club, Fidelity House, churches
- *what do groupings see as their needs and issues

Joan and the group developed the following action plans:

- 1) Meet with school officials – special education, school principals, superintendent, PTO's.
- 2) Meet with church officials
- 3) Meet with new town manager – invite him to March meeting, tell our story.
- 4) Get Selectmen on Board through networking.
- 5) Develop talking points, i.e. family violence, child services, elders services, unmet needs.
- 6) Develop questionnaire leading to discussions to solicit –
What is it that you need
- 7) Form subcommittee to develop questionnaire
Larry G., Cindy, Donna, Jeannette, and Carlene will be the subcommittee

The next Board meeting is Wednesday, February 25, 2004., 6:00 pm (Town Meeting at 8:00 pm)
A light supper will be provided.

Jack Bowler moved to adjourn, seconded by Larry Greco. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.